United Nations A/HRC/37/NGO/2

General Assembly

Distr.: General
1 February 2018

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-seventh session
26 February-23 March 2018
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 January 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.18-01493(E)
1801493

Please recycle

Mother Tongue Education for Iranian Ethnic Groups

Education of mother tongue and native culture is an essential human rights factor for any multicultural society like Iranian society. Iranian ethnic groups and their NGOs have always strived for enhancement of the right to educate their mother language in primary schools and universities. In recent years, Azeri and Kurdi languages and cultures are incorporated in the schools and universities curriculum in the western provinces of the country. The universities of the region offer Azeri and Kurdi literature courses and at the primary school level, Torki1 and Kurdi2 school books, along with a book on "local cultures", are added to the curricula.

However, local culture materials, taught in primary schools of some regions, has received various comments from the local NGOs. Arab minorities have expressed concerns over the considerable difference between the formal Arabic language taught at schools and their colloquial or dialectal Arabic, while members of Kurds and Azeri have offered comments on the contents of the recently published Azeri and Kurdi school books. Also, the existing teaching material for "local culture" has received a number of comments.

Being concerned with the minorities' right to language and culture, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) calls on the Iranian government to magnify its efforts to strengthen its language policies in a way that local language learning is available to all ethnicities. As article 15 of the Iranian constitution clearly emphasizes on the right of minorities to learn their languages, and United Nations Human Rights Committee General Comment No. 24, emphasizes that States cannot deny the minorities' right to language and culture, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is recommended to strengthen its policies and offer inclusive ethnic language education to members of all ethnicities.

ODVV also calls on the Ministry of Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran to have a continuous dialogue with ethnic groups, on the content of the educational material for teaching local culture and languages. Minority groups should participate in preparation of the educational materials of their children and a constant consult with members of the ethnic groups will contribute to shared views on the content of the recently designed school books.

ODVV also calls on all NGOs, concerned with teaching local language at school to join each other to engage actively in promoting the education of native languages and reach the target groups living in remote geographical regions.

---

1 http://madaniatnews.com/?p=4862

2 http://www.farid14.loxblog.com/post/1